



Mississippi Seal of Biliteracy

Guidance for Program Implementation
and Acceptable Assessments
Revised 2023

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Introduction

The purpose of this *Guidance for Program Implementation and Acceptable Assessments* document is to help districts and schools understand and effectively implement the Mississippi Seal of Biliteracy program. According to the Mississippi Seal of Biliteracy Policy and Guidelines, students must demonstrate a high level of proficiency in both English and a world language to qualify for a silver or gold level seal of biliteracy.

FAQ:

What do districts and schools need to do to participate in the Seal of Biliteracy program?

Follow and refer to the information in the *Mississippi Seal of Biliteracy Guidelines* and in this document.

Chapter 28: Curriculum

Rule 28.8 Mississippi Seal of Biliteracy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish minimum criteria for Local Education Agencies (LEAs) in awarding Seals of Biliteracy. The Seal of Biliteracy recognizes and awards students who have attained proficiency in one or more world languages and English by high school graduation. The Seal of Biliteracy demonstrates the attainment of biliteracy for students, employers, and postsecondary institutions. It also signals a student's readiness for college and career and for engagement as a global citizen. Participation in the Mississippi Department of Education's (MDE) Seal of Biliteracy shall be determined by LEAs. Beginning school year 2019-2020 the MDE shall require participating school districts to follow the award process as defined in the Mississippi Seal of Biliteracy Guidance Document. LEAs are also required to report Seal of Biliteracy award data to the MDE.

District Requirements when Awarding the Seal of Biliteracy

Each district shall adopt a local school board policy which adheres to the basic standards set forth by the MDE.

Standards:

- a. The Seal shall be completed by an eligible student's high school graduation date.
- b. The Seal shall be noted on the high school transcript as a credential that can be viewed by colleges, universities, and future employers.
- c. LEAs shall set up their own process for collecting, recording, and maintaining the data for students receiving the Seal of Biliteracy. This shall include the evidence verifying criteria for the Seal had been met upon which attaining the Seal is based, the number of Silver Seals of Biliteracy and Gold Seals of Biliteracy awarded, and the languages other than English in which students earned the Seal. The data shall also be divided into subgroups specifying the number of students earning the Seal who are former English learners and the number of students who are native English speakers.

Source Code: *Miss. Code Ann. § 37-1-3* (Adopted October 10, 2019)



What are the Acceptable Assessments for Demonstrating English Proficiency?

Assessments for Determining Language Proficiency

For current minimum target levels and acceptable assessment options, refer to the following charts for a list of current assessments used by districts and score scenarios in both English and a world language to assist in determining the level of seal to be awarded.

Note: Educators should be aware that some tests (e.g., English II assessments) may be given only once per academic year. Based on the chosen test, teachers, counselors, and students will need to plan in advance so that learners have the time to reach proficiency milestones, take the assessment, and receive scores prior to graduation.

FAQ:

What are the current approved proficiency assessments for English and world languages?

Use the current list of approved state assessments. See the following charts for the most updated list. Note that the assessments are listed by scores needed for each award level (silver and gold).

Can other assessments be used?

Only the approved list may be used. These assessments were vetted through a required procurement process as required by the MDE (For a list of approved world language assessments, see page 9 in this document, or visit the [Mississippi Seal of Biliteracy webpage](#).)

If students take a world language in elementary or middle school, can they take the assessment prior to high school?

Students must take the assessment while enrolled in grades 9-12.

Do students need to take both an English and a world language assessment?

Yes, native and non-native speakers must demonstrate proficiency in English and a world language by using both an English and a world language acceptable assessment.

Is the composite score the only needed score to demonstrate proficiency in a world language?

No, the composite score along with the scores from all tested domains are used to determine proficiency in a world language.

English Assessments
American College Testing (ACT) www.act.org/content/act/en/products-and-services/the-act.html
MDE English II Test www.mdek12.org/OSA/MAAP
MDE ELPT *This assessment is only acceptable for English learner students who are assessed at the high school level. www.mdek12.org/OSA/SP/ELPT

What are the Approved Assessments and Vendors for Demonstrating World Language Proficiency?

In accordance with Mississippi State Board of Education Policy Chapter 28.8, the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) will provide a list of approved assessments for use in determining student levels of language proficiency for awarding local seals of biliteracy. The assessments include the language domains (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) that are appropriate for the given language, the modes of communication (interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational) appropriate for the language, and adhere to the major levels of proficiency as described by the American Council of the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL).

A request for qualifications was released, and proposed vendors were reviewed by a panel with expertise in world languages and English learners. Vendors that met all required components of the scope of services were approved for inclusion on the MDE Approved List of Mississippi Seal of Biliteracy Proficiency Assessments, effective **December 15, 2022 – June 30, 2025**.

Vendors must work with districts to ensure that testing and reports are provided within the deadline requirements of the school district. Each of the world language assessments must align with the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines and/or Performance Descriptors as well as the Mississippi World Languages Standards.

Districts will work directly with vendors to secure World Language assessments and will be responsible for all costs of the administration of the assessments.

Vendor Name	Assessment Name
<p style="text-align: center;">Avant Assessment</p> <p>Support: avantassessment.com (888) 731-7887</p>	<p>STAMP 4S Assessments: Arabic, English, French, German, Hebrew, Hindi, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Mandarin, Polish, Portuguese (Brazilian), Russian, Spanish, Spanish Monolingual</p> <p>STAMP WS Assessments: Amharic, Armenian, Cabo Verdean, Chin (Haka), Chuukese, Czech, Filipino (Tagalog), Haitian-Creole, Hawaiian (‘Olelo Hawai’i), Hmong, Ilocano, Kannada, Marathi, Marshallese, Samoan, Somali Maay Maay, Somali Maxaa, Swahili (3-skill R,W,S), Tamil, Telugu, Turkish, Ukrainian, Urdu, Vietnamese, Yoruba (3-skill R,W,S), Yup’ik, Zomi</p> <p>STAMP Assessments: American Sign Language (ASL), Latin</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Data Recognition Corporation</p> <p>Support: laslinks.com/las-links-espanol 800.538.9547</p>	<p>LAS Links Español: Spanish</p>

What are the Score Requirements for Determining Language Proficiency?

For the purposes of the Mississippi Seal of Biliteracy, world languages are viewed as any natural human language other than English (including American Sign Language).

All students (including a student whose native language is English or another world language and a student with disabilities) are eligible to attain one of the following levels of biliteracy:



Silver Mississippi Seal of Biliteracy - which demonstrates a functional fluency level in the intermediate-mid range. (See the Mississippi Silver Seal of Biliteracy chart below)



Gold Mississippi Seal of Biliteracy - which demonstrates a working fluency at the advanced-low range. (See the Mississippi Gold Seal of Biliteracy chart below)

- **Must a student take a world language course in order to take the Seal of Biliteracy world language assessment? Could the student already be bilingual or have received language instruction outside of the school?**

A world language course is not required; however, some native speakers of a language may need additional classroom support to meet the test requirements in all language domains (speaking, listening, reading, and writing).

- **What if there is not an approved assessment for a specific language?**

If an acceptable assessment is not available for a specific language (such as American Sign Language), the alternate portfolio-based assessment may be used.

This may also be used for students with certain disabilities that prevent them from using a computer-based assessment.

- **Should score report documentation be kept in the student's cumulative folder?**

It is recommended that districts maintain documentation of official score report(s) in both the student's cumulative folder (original file or scanned copy).

See the information below (or pages 9-12 in the MS Seal of Biliteracy Guidelines) for further information.

MISSISSIPPI SILVER SEAL OF BILITERACY

ACCEPTABLE EVIDENCE OF PROFICIENCY – Districts must maintain documentation of official score report(s) (original file or scanned copy).

Evidence of both English and world language categories shall be completed within grades 9-12, submitted in a legible format, and show the applicant’s name.

Note: Some exams do not provide results until after June. Students and advisors may need to plan accordingly.

ENGLISH

Language	Assessment Name and link	Minimum Score Requirements
English	American College Testing (ACT) www.act.org/content/act/en/products-and-services/the-act.html	18-19 on the English section
	MDE English II Test www.mdek12.org/OSA/MAAP	4
	MDE ELPT Note: This assessment is only acceptable for English learner students who are assessed at the high school level. www.mdek12.org/OSA/SP/ELPT	4 (proficient) or 5 (above proficient) in all tested domains

WORLD LANGUAGES

Language	Assessment Name and link	Minimum Score Requirements
French, German, Italian, Spanish, Arabic, Mandarin, Hebrew, Hindi, Korean, Polish, Russian *See a full list of available languages	STAMP (Avant) 4S www.globalsealofbiliteracy.net/avant-stamp-test-state-seal-of-biliteracy-resources	Level 5 or higher Intermediate Mid or higher in all domains and composite
Amharic, Somali (Maay Maay and Maxaa), Urdu *See a full list of available languages	Avant WorldSpeak www.globalsealofbiliteracy.net/avant-worldspeak-test-state-seal-of-biliteracy-resources	Level 5 or higher Intermediate Mid or higher in all domains and composite
Spanish	LAS Links Español	Level 3 Intermediate Speaking 491-552 Listening 477-504 Reading 527-575 Writing 522-554 Overall 504-546
Tribal Languages	Tribes may certify that a student is proficient in the respective language using their own methods and processes for determining proficiency in their tribal language. Students may also utilize the alternative portfolio for verification of biliteracy.	
Other Languages (i.e., Latin, ASL, etc.) or Evidence for students with certain disabilities	Alternative Evidence Portfolio Assessment	Overall rubric score 3



MISSISSIPPI GOLD SEAL OF BILITERACY

ACCEPTABLE EVIDENCE OF PROFICIENCY - Districts must maintain documentation of official score report(s) (original file or scanned copy).

Evidence of both English and world language categories shall be completed within grades 9-12, submitted in a clearly legible format, and show the applicant's name.

Note: Some exams do not provide results until after June. Students and advisors may need to plan accordingly.

ENGLISH

Language	Assessment Name and link	Minimum Score Requirements
English	American College Testing (ACT) www.act.org/content/act/en/products-and-services/the-act.html	20 or higher on the English section
	MDE English II Test www.mdek12.org/OSA/MAAP	5
	MDE ELPT Note: This assessment is only acceptable for English learner students who are assessed at the high school level. www.mdek12.org/OSA/SP/ELPT	5 in all tested domains

WORLD LANGUAGES

Language	Assessment Name and link	Minimum Score Requirements
French, German, Italian, Spanish, Arabic, Mandarin, Hebrew, Hindi, Korean, Polish, Russian *See a full list of available languages	STAMP (Avant) 4S www.globalsealofbiliteracy.net/avant-stamp-test-state-seal-of-biliteracy-resources	Level 7 or higher Advanced Low or higher in all domains and composite
Amharic, Somali (Maay Maay and Maxaa), Urdu *See a full list of available languages	Avant WorldSpeak www.globalsealofbiliteracy.net/avant-worldspeak-test-state-seal-of-biliteracy-resources	Level 7 or higher Advanced Low or higher in all domains and composite
Spanish	LAS Links Español	Level 4 Proficient Speaking 553-604 Listening 505-639 Reading 576-664 Writing 555-619 Overall 547-631
Tribal Languages	Tribes may certify that a student is proficient in the respective language using their methods and processes for determining proficiency in their tribal language. Students may also utilize the alternative portfolio for verification of biliteracy.	
Other Languages (i.e., Latin, ASL, etc.) or Evidence for students with certain disabilities	Alternative Evidence Portfolio Assessment	Overall rubric score 4



How are the Proficiency Levels for Awarding a Silver or Gold Seal of Biliteracy Determined?

The minimal score requirements and acceptable assessments for both levels of biliteracy are identified in the preceding charts by vendor. These minimum score requirements are determined based on ACTFL levels of proficiency; therefore, it is essential that schools use the most updated score ranges as provided by the MDE. Native or non-native English Speakers must meet the criteria prior to graduation.

Students are only recognized and awarded at one level of biliteracy. Students must be assessed in both English and a world language. The score scenario examples provided below are based on assessments currently used by districts and will assist in determining the level of recognition.

FAQ:

- Can students earn more than one Seal of Biliteracy for one language?**
 Students may only earn one Seal of Biliteracy for each world language in which they demonstrate proficiency.
- Can students earn a Seal of Biliteracy in more than one world language?**
 Students may earn multiple Seals of Biliteracy if they meet proficiency level requirements for more than one world language.
- Can students take a language assessment multiple years to try and level up from silver to gold?**
 Yes. Note that only the highest level should be noted on the student’s final transcript.
- Is there a specific testing window when students must take the assessments?**
 Testing windows for world languages are determined by school districts. Schools should work with their school testing coordinator and the approved vendor of choice to determine a testing schedule. English assessments are determined by districts.

Student Scenarios for Minimal Requirements For the Silver Seal of Biliteracy and Gold Seals of Biliteracy

Example Score Student Scenarios

STUDENT A scored a 5 on the English assessment and a 5 on the world language assessment, therefore the student is awarded the Silver Seal of Biliteracy because they did not meet the gold level for both assessments.

ENGLISH		WORLD LANGUAGE	
Assessment	English II	Assessment	STAMP (Avant) 4s
Assessment Score	5	Assessment Score	5 or higher in all domains and the composite score
Seal of Biliteracy	Gold	Seal of Biliteracy	Silver
SEAL AWARDED		Silver Seal of Biliteracy	

STUDENT B scored a 4 on the English assessment and at least a 4 on all levels of the world language assessment, therefore the student is awarded the Silver Seal of Biliteracy because they did not meet the gold level for both assessments.

ENGLISH		WORLD LANGUAGE	
Assessment	English II	Assessment	LAS Links Español
Assessment Score	4	Assessment Score	Speaking 4 Listening 5 Reading 4 Writing 4 Overall 4.25
Seal of Biliteracy	Silver	Seal of Biliteracy	Gold
SEAL AWARDED		Silver Seal of Biliteracy	

STUDENT C scored a 5 in three domains and a 4 in one domain on the English assessment and a 7 in all areas of the world language assessment, therefore the student is awarded the Silver Seal of Biliteracy because they did not meet the gold level for both assessments.

ENGLISH		WORLD LANGUAGE	
Assessment	MDE English Language Proficiency Test (ELPT)	Assessment	AVANT WS
Assessment Score	5 in 3 domains, 4 in one domain	Assessment Score	7 or higher in all domains and on the composite
Seal of Biliteracy	Silver	Seal of Biliteracy	Gold
SEAL AWARDED		Silver Seal of Biliteracy	

STUDENT D scored a 5 in all domains on the English assessment and a 4 or higher on the world language assessment, therefore the student is awarded the Gold Seal of Biliteracy because they met the gold level for both assessments.

ENGLISH		WORLD LANGUAGE	
Assessment	MDE ELPT	Assessment	LAS Links Español
Assessment Score	5 in all 4 domains	Assessment Score	Speaking 5 Listening 5 Reading 4 Writing 4 Overall 4.5
Seal of Biliteracy	Gold	Seal of Biliteracy	Gold
SEAL AWARDED		Gold Seal of Biliteracy	

STUDENT E did not meet the minimal requirements for gold or silver seal in English but scored a 3 on their world language assessment, therefore they do not meet the requirements to earn a Seal of Biliteracy.

ENGLISH		WORLD LANGUAGE	
Assessment	ACT	Assessment	Alternate Portfolio Rubric Score
Assessment Score	17	Assessment Score	3 or higher in all domains and overall
Seal of Biliteracy	Not met	Seal of Biliteracy	Silver
SEAL AWARDED None			

STUDENT F earned a 22 on the English assessment but scored a 2 on the world language assessment which did not meet the minimal requirements for either seal in a world language, therefore, they do not meet the requirements to earn a Seal of Biliteracy.

ENGLISH		WORLD LANGUAGE	
Assessment	ACT	Assessment	AVANT
Assessment Score	22	Assessment Score	2 in all domains and the composite score
Seal of Biliteracy	Gold	Seal of Biliteracy	Not met
SEAL AWARDED None			

STUDENT G scored a 4 on the English assessment and an overall score of 3.5 on the world language assessment, therefore, they will earn the Silver Seal of Biliteracy.

ENGLISH		WORLD LANGUAGE	
Assessment	English II	Assessment	Alternative Portfolio Rubric Score
Assessment Score	4	Assessment Score	Speaking 4 Listening 4 Reading 3 Writing 3 Overall 3.5
Seal of Biliteracy	Silver	Seal of Biliteracy	Silver
SEAL AWARDED Silver Seal of Biliteracy			

When Should a Portfolio-based Assessment be Used?

Student Portfolio-Based Alternative Evidence Method for World Language Assessments For the Silver Seal of Biliteracy and Gold Seals of Biliteracy

A student may demonstrate a high level of proficiency in a foreign language by using the portfolio process as an alternative evidence method under certain circumstances. Those circumstances include the following:

FAQ:

- **When should a Portfolio-based assessment be used?**

A portfolio-based assessment should be used when there is not a readily available assessment in a particular foreign language; *and/or*

If the district determines the portfolio process is necessary because of a student's disability. Documentation based on their disability, as stated in the student's IEP, 504 plan, or other documents demonstrating a disability, shall be provided to the MDE as to why standardized assessment is not appropriate. The portfolio process is an alternative method of providing evidence that the student is proficient in one of the levels for a particular world language(s).

The portfolio process includes the following steps:

- Student, parents/guardians, and school district personnel shall work together to secure a language expert who is proficient in the domains of that language and who can legitimately review and assess the student's proficiency in the four domains of the world language.
- The language expert reviews the evidence submitted by the student (or meets with the student virtually or in person) to assess the domains and certify that the student's evidence meets the high criteria.
- To assess the student, the language expert should use the portfolio rubric below (or a similar one adopted by the local district) to assess each domain (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). If one or more domains are not applicable, the expert shall provide documentation (such as a written statement of explanation from the language expert). (i.e., Languages that may not have all of the language domains including but not limited to ASL, Latin, and some Native American languages).
- The language expert's evaluation and signature indicate that the student meets the criteria and sufficient evidence is demonstrated.
- The language expert's evaluation should provide feedback to the school regarding the evidence demonstrated (i.e., the student's completion of a real-world application task in each domain and the student's level of proficiency within the domains).
- Each local school district will determine the method for maintaining the records and documentation for the Seal of Biliteracy that meets the district standard for maintaining records and original signatures.
- Districts shall ensure that the portfolio assessment includes both expressive and receptive aspects of the language assessment.

Sample Rubric for Scoring Alternate Portfolio-Based Assessments

To assess the student using an alternative portfolio, the language expert may use the following rubric or a similar one adopted by the local district.

FAQ:

How do we get a language expert?

Schools may utilize experts from various institutions such as colleges or universities, language institutes, cultural centers, etc. to locate language experts.

Alternative Portfolio Assessments SEAL OF BILITERACY						
Required scores for earning a Seal of Biliteracy:						
3.0 or higher in all domains and overall - Silver Seal of Biliteracy (meets ACTFL intermediate-mid level of proficiency)						
4.0 or higher in all domains and overall - Gold Seal of Biliteracy (meets ACTFL advanced-low level of proficiency)						
Rubric Scoring Guidelines:						
0 – student is unable to complete any components of the task						
1 – student is unable to complete all components of the task						
2 – student completes task with many errors that make understanding difficult						
3 – student completes task with some errors that do not interfere with understanding						
4 – student completes task with few or no errors; understanding is clear at all times						
DOMAIN: Speaking/Expressive (Interpersonal Speaking)						
Rate the following areas of evidence on a scale of 1 (lowest) to 4 (highest).						
A. The student can participate with ease in conversations on familiar topics.	0	1	2	3	4	Evaluator's Notes
B. The student can usually talk about events and experiences at various points in their lives.	0	1	2	3	4	Evaluator's Notes
C. The student can usually describe people, places, and things.	0	1	2	3	4	Evaluator's Notes
D. The student can handle social interactions in everyday situations, sometimes even when there is an unexpected complication.	0	1	2	3	4	Evaluator's Notes
Overall Speaking Score Average the scores from letters A-D	Overall Average Score for Speaking: _____					



Examples of evidence that **could** be included in the student’s portfolio for the speaking domain. The student can:

- Ask for and provide information about a personal interest, current local/world events; *or*
- Ask for and provide information about a hobby or activity; *or*
- Ask for and provide descriptions of places that the student knows or places that the student would like to visit; *or*
- Talk about family history; *or*
- Talk about jobs and career plans; *or*
- the basic rules of a game or sport and answer questions about them or they can ask for, follow, and give instructions for preparing food, etc.; *or*

DOMAIN: Listening /Receptive (Interpretive Listening)

Rate the following areas of evidence on a scale of 1(lowest) to 4 (highest).

<p>A. The student can easily understand the main idea in conversations and oral/signed presentations on a variety of topics related to everyday life and personal interests and studies.</p>	<p>0 1 2 3 4</p>	<p>Evaluator’s Notes</p>
<p>B. The student can usually understand what they hear in conversations even when something unexpected is expressed.</p>	<p>0 1 2 3 4</p>	<p>Evaluator’s Notes</p>
<p>C. The student can follow what they hear about events and experiences.</p>	<p>0 1 2 3 4</p>	<p>Evaluator’s Notes</p>

Overall Listening Score

Average the scores from letters A-C

Overall Average Score for Listening: _____

Examples of evidence that could be included in the student’s portfolio for the listening domain:

The student can

- Understand foreign visitors about activities they have done and are planning to do while in town; *or*
- Understand a tour guide’s description of a city’s history and attractions; *or*
- Understand details about a nutritional recommendation in a public service health announcement; *or*
- Understand the services offered in a radio advertisement for an auto repair shop; *or*
- Understand details from public service announcements, such as severe weather warnings and safety alerts; *or*
- Other types of evidence as determined by the student and agreed upon by the authority in the language.

DOMAIN: Reading (Interpretive Reading)

Rate the following areas of evidence on a scale of 1 (lowest) to 4 (highest).

<p>A. The student can easily understand the main idea of texts related to everyday life, personal interests, and studies.</p>	<p>0 1 2 3 4</p>	<p>Evaluator’s Notes</p>
<p>B. The student can follow stories and descriptions of events and experiences during various time frames in history.</p>	<p>0 1 2 3 4</p>	<p>Evaluator’s Notes</p>

Overall Writing Score

Average the scores from letters A-B

Overall Average Score Reading: _____

Examples of evidence that **could** be included in the student’s portfolio for the reading domain:



The student can

- Understand written accounts of personal events or experiences; *or*
- Understand a letter describing a family experience/vacation; *or*
- Understand a written description of an individual’s daily life; *or*
- Follow simple written directions; *or*
- Understand the main idea of and a few supporting facts about famous people and historic events in a biography; *or*
- Other types of evidence as determined by the student and agreed upon by the authority in the language.

DOMAIN: Writing (Presentational Writing)

Rate the following areas of evidence on a scale of 1 (lowest) to 4 (highest).

A. The student can write on topics related to school, work, and community in a general organized way.	0 1 2 3 4	Evaluator’s Notes
B. The student can write some simple paragraphs about events and experiences in various time frames.	0 1 2 3 4	Evaluator’s Notes

Overall Speaking Score Average the scores from letters A-B	Overall Average Score Writing: _____
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The language authority should consider the student’s use of grammar and vocabulary when scoring the student’s writing. Some examples of evidence that **could** be included in the student’s portfolio for the writing domain:

The student can:

- Write about school and academic topics such as writing a simple summary about something the student has learned in school; *or*
- Write a series of steps needed to complete a task; *or*
- Prepare notes for someone absent from class or school; *or*
- Write the content for a multi-media presentation, a handout, a synopsis, etc.; *or*
- Write about work and career topics; *or*
- Write about community topics and events; *or*
- Write about an entertainment or social event; *or*
- Other types of evidence as determined by the student and agreed upon by the authority in the language.

RECOMMENDED SEAL AWARD

Average Overall Score Average the overall scores from the Speaking, Listening, Reading, and Writing domains	Final Average Score: _____
	Recommended Seal Award: No seal (0-2.9) Silver Seal of Biliteracy (3.0-3.9) Gold Seal of Biliteracy (4.0)

Student Name

Evaluator Signature

Date

